

ULKE, JULIUS
(PHOTO OF DEATH BED)

DRAWER 13A

Personalities

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Julius Ulke

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Julian Ulke photographer
Deathbed scene

abraham Lincoln : The War Years Vol IV
Carl Sandburg 1939

p. 289

"The room is fifteen feet long by nine wide, entered from the hallway by a door having a large pane of glass, covered with a curtain on the inside. A Brussels carpet is on the floor. The wallpaper is brown figured with white. Around are a few chairs, a plain bureau, a small wood stove, a washstand with pitcher + bowl. Immediately above the bed is a picture of an Italian Woman, a little boy clinging to her as she plays a guitar for some rough soldiers on the porch of a wayside inn. Beyond hangs an engraving of Rosa Bonheur's "The Horse Fair".



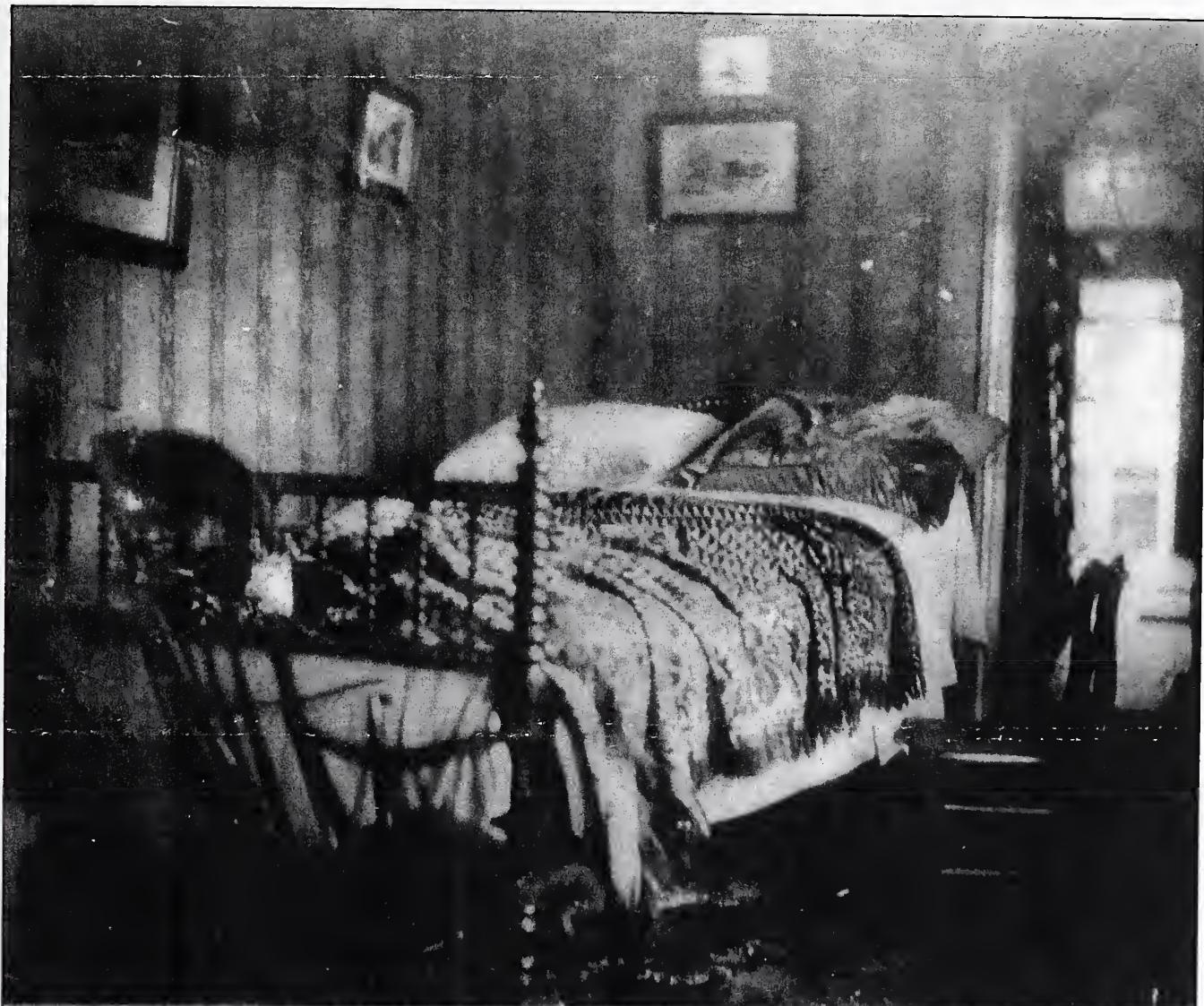
Lincoln Lore

January, 1984

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor
Ruth E. Cook, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1751

LINCOLN'S DEATHBED



Verso of the room in which President Lincoln died Saturday evening,
April 15th 1865 at the residence of Wm. Peters, No 455 W. Market St.
Columbus, Ohio opposite Ford's Theatre. The room was decorated by Wm. T. Gloddy, M.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Photograph by Julius Ulke. See story inside.

As the morning light crept into the disheveled room of William T. Clark on April 15, 1865, one of the upstairs boarders carried his camera into the room. Clark roomed in the house of William Petersen, and the President of the United States had just died on Clark's bed. The cameraman was Julius Ulke, who, with his brother Henry, had been up all night fetching water for the doctors.

Tired though they were, everyone sensed the historical importance of the events just witnessed in Clark's humble little room. Julius Ulke apparently sensed the commercial possibilities in the situation as well. He and his brother were artistic, but it was difficult to make a living as an artist in bustling, commerce-minded America. Julius photographed people in Washington, selling his little paper pictures mounted on stiff cards with his name printed on the back. Henry, after a stint as an illustrator in New York, made his living painting the portraits of Washington's bureaucrats and politicians.

Julius Ulke knew that Americans would be curious to know what Lincoln's deathbed looked like, and he was just the man to show them. Fate seemed to have played into his hands, bringing the American historical event of the century almost to his very doorstep. He took at least two photographs of the scene before Clark cleaned up his room. Eventually, he mounted one of the pictures on a stiff card and had a caption carefully lettered on it: "View of the room in which President Lincoln died. . . ."

Others sniffed the scent of profit that hung about the little boarding house. Albert Berghaus, special artist for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, had followed President Lincoln

HENRY ULKE,
278 Pennsylvania Avenue,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1865.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Credit on the back of a Ulke photograph.

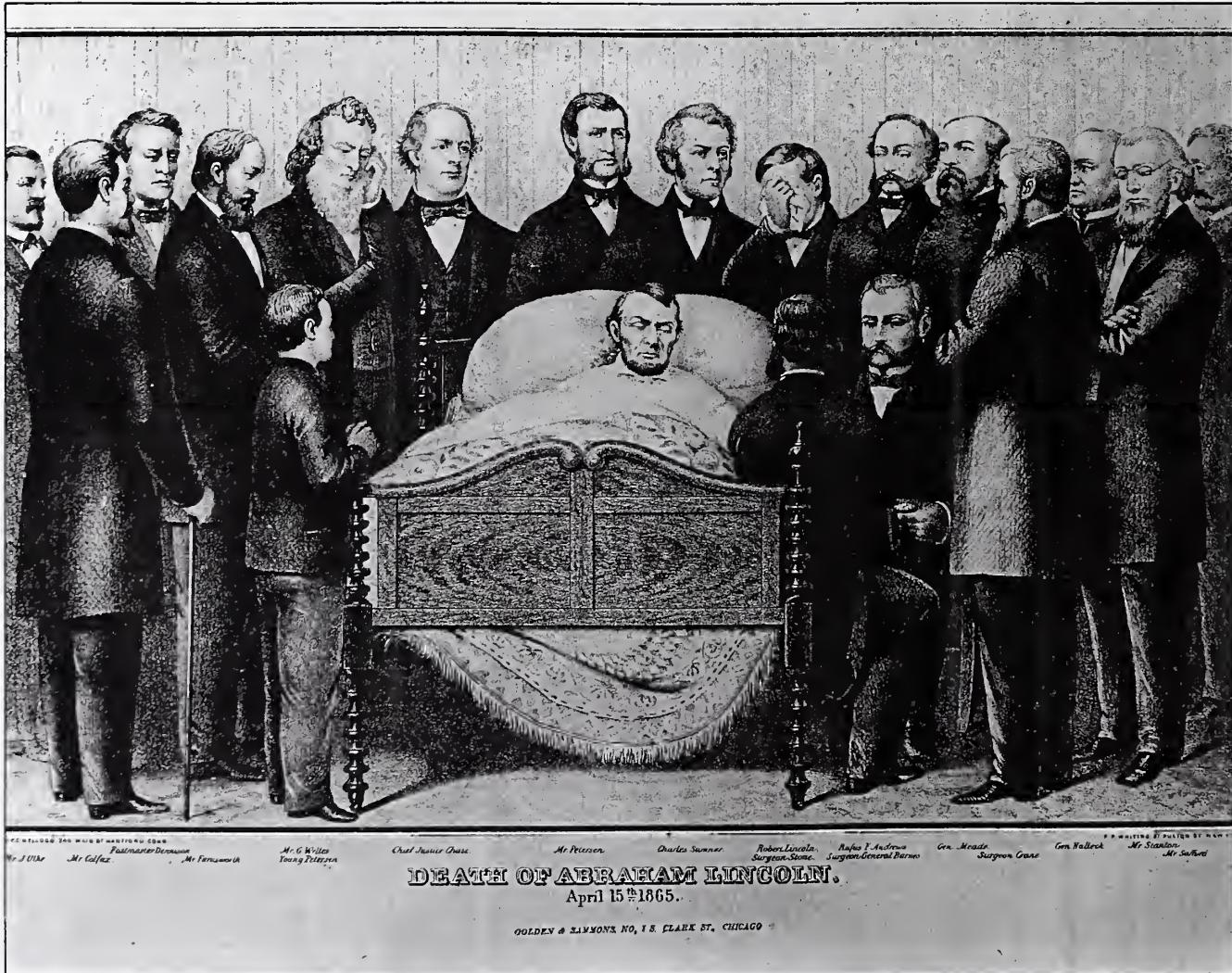
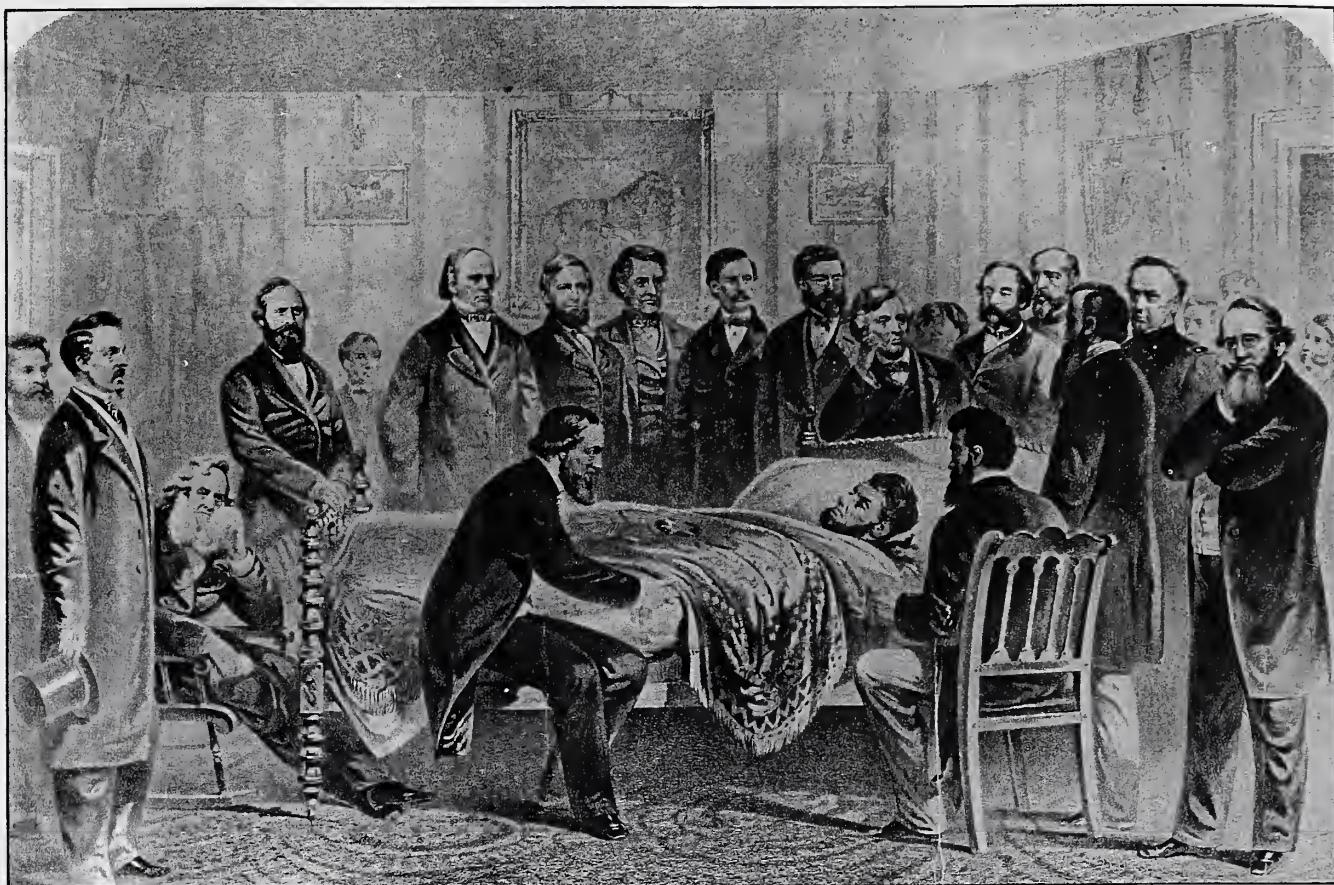


FIGURE 2. A Kellogg lithograph shows Julius Ulke at far left.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Henry Ulke appears with a top hat at left in Edward Mendel's lithograph, based on Berghaus's illustration.

to Richmond less than two weeks earlier, to capture the scene of what proved to be his last triumph. On Easter Sunday, April 16, Berghaus was at the Petersen house sketching the scene and asking the boarders who was present when Lincoln died. Most of the boarders saw to it that they were immortalized in Berghaus's sketch, for they placed Salmon P. Chase at the scene and he was not there in fact. Both the Ulkes appeared in the picture. *Leslie's* devoted a double issue to Lincoln's assassination and depended heavily on Berghaus's work as the centerpiece of their sensational appeal.

Julius Ulke, however, was destined not to realize anything from his photographs. The president's widow had forbidden photographs of her slain husband, and the War Department saw to the destruction of some photographs of Lincoln's body lying in state. The enterprising photographer probably read about this in the newspapers and decided not to try to sell his photographs.

They remained in the family for years and became wrinkled and torn, but from all evidence no copies were made. One of Ulke's photographs is well known from publication in *Life* magazine in 1961 and in Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr.'s *Twenty Days* in 1965. The other photograph was recently acquired by the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum and is reproduced on the cover of this issue of *Lincoln Lore*.

What became of Julius Ulke after 1865 is not known, but his brother Henry attained considerable prominence as a painter of the prominent personalities in Washington. One of these was Edwin M. Stanton, who had been present at Lincoln's deathbed and whose destruction of coffin photographs of the martyred president had perhaps ruined Julius's hopes for commercial gain from his photographs. When Henry Ulke painted Stanton, he chose a pose highly reminiscent of the pose Albert Berghaus had used in his influential illustration of the deathbed scene for *Leslie's*. The Stanton portrait suggests that Henry Ulke may have hoped to exploit the scene at the Petersen house as well.



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.

FIGURE 5. Henry Ulke's portrait of Edwin M. Stanton.

The Illinois State Historical Society's 1985

CALL FOR PAPERS

*To be presented at the
SIXTH ANNUAL*

ILLINOIS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

NOVEMBER 29-30, 1985



The Illinois State Historical Society is seeking proposals for papers, or sessions, to be delivered at the Sixth Annual Symposium on Illinois History, November 29 and 30, 1985. Papers, or sessions, will be considered on any aspect of the history, literature, art and culture, politics, geography, archeology, anthropology, and related fields of Illinois and/or the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. The Symposium will be held in Springfield.

Individuals who wish to submit proposals should send a three hundred to six hundred word summary, along with resumes of intended participants, to:

Roger D. Bridges, Head of Library Services
Illinois State Historical Library
Old State Capitol
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Proposals must be received by April 2, 1985. Individuals will be notified of the Committee's decision by June 3, 1985.

Symposium Committee Chairman: Robert W. McCluggage, Loyola University of Chicago; Members: Rodney O. Davis, Knox College; Raymond E. Hauser, Waubonsee Community College; Carol Helwig, Eastern Illinois University; Robert P. Howard, Springfield; Robert M. McColley, University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign; John Y. Simon, Southern Illinois University—Carbondale; Robert E. Sterling, Joliet Junior College; and Donald F. Tingley, Eastern Illinois University.

TWENTY DAYS

Lincoln died here two hours ago.

Here is the evidence of that agonizing night of dying one hundred years ago. This historic photograph—fading, torn at the edges—unpublished and unknown for ninety-six long years—reveals death's course in shocking detail. Just a few minutes before it was taken Lincoln lay diagonally across this rumpled bed, having bled all night from his head onto this pillow. Another blood-soaked pillow was lying on the ground in the yard outside the death room. William Petersen, the proprietor of the boarding house, angry at the condition of his house after a night of being used as a makeshift hospital, had snatched the other pillow while the dead President was still lying there, and hurled it out the window.

As soon as the last visitor had left, the upstairs boarder Julius Ulke brought out his cherished camera, a great unwieldy wooden box with its powerful lenses set in shining brass. All night long the Ulke brothers had helped carry hot water upstairs from the kitchen to Willie Clark's room where Lincoln lay. Now that the room was empty Julius persuaded Clark not to move anything, even by a quarter of an inch, until he set up his camera and adjusted it on its stand at the far end of the room. During the night the bed had been pulled out from the wall so that the doctors could encircle Lincoln. Now Ulke and Clark pushed it back to its original position. The trays and bottles were ready. The long exposure of the sticky, collodion-coated glass negative was made, and, as it had to be, immediately developed. Five minutes later Ulke held it up to the light. There on his piece of glass was the humble room, there the morning light streaming in through the front door past the stairway banisters, there the pillows with their dark evidence, there the chair in which Mrs. Lincoln had sat as she begged, "Oh, shoot me, Doctor, why don't you shoot me, too?"

The torn and faded evidence of the tragic night.

Henry Ulke imprint filed
in Safe file cabinet.

Lincoln Died Here

This photograph now owned
by Louis A. Warren Lincoln
Library & Museum
January 1985

TWO HOURS Before

DISCOVERY SHOWS HORROR OF DEATH SCENE

For 96 years this historic photograph has remained unpublished, passed down through the family of the photographer, Julius Ulke. Thirty years ago it traveled across the Atlantic to Mrs. Ulke's granddaughter, Mrs. Easter, emigrated to England. This year 93-year-old Mrs. Easter decided to part with her precious possession in order to raise money for her church. Here is a moving account by a Lincoln scholar of the scene that took place on that bitter morning of April 15, 1865.

by DOROTHY MESERVE KUNHARDT

This torn and faded 96-year-old photograph of a rumpled bed, with its shocking impact as one learns whose blood has soaked the pillows, is one of the great finds of the American story. Abraham Lincoln lay for the last nine hours of his life in this humble boardinghouse room. Only minutes before the shutter's click, his body had been lifted up and taken back to the White House on the drizzly dark morning of April 15, 1865.

Julius Ulke, a boarder in the Petersen house where Lincoln died, was the zealous owner of that mysterious invention, a camera. Now that Lincoln's body had gone, he persuaded William T. Clark, the young Massachusetts soldier who rented the room we see, not to move anything even by a quarter of an inch until he set up his unwieldy wooden box in front of the piteous bed and the chair Mrs. Lincoln sat in as she begged, "Oh, shoot me, doctor, why don't you shoot me too?" There was the brownish striped wallpaper, framed pictures of animals, a view out into the hall with its glimpse of stairs, the steep bannister.

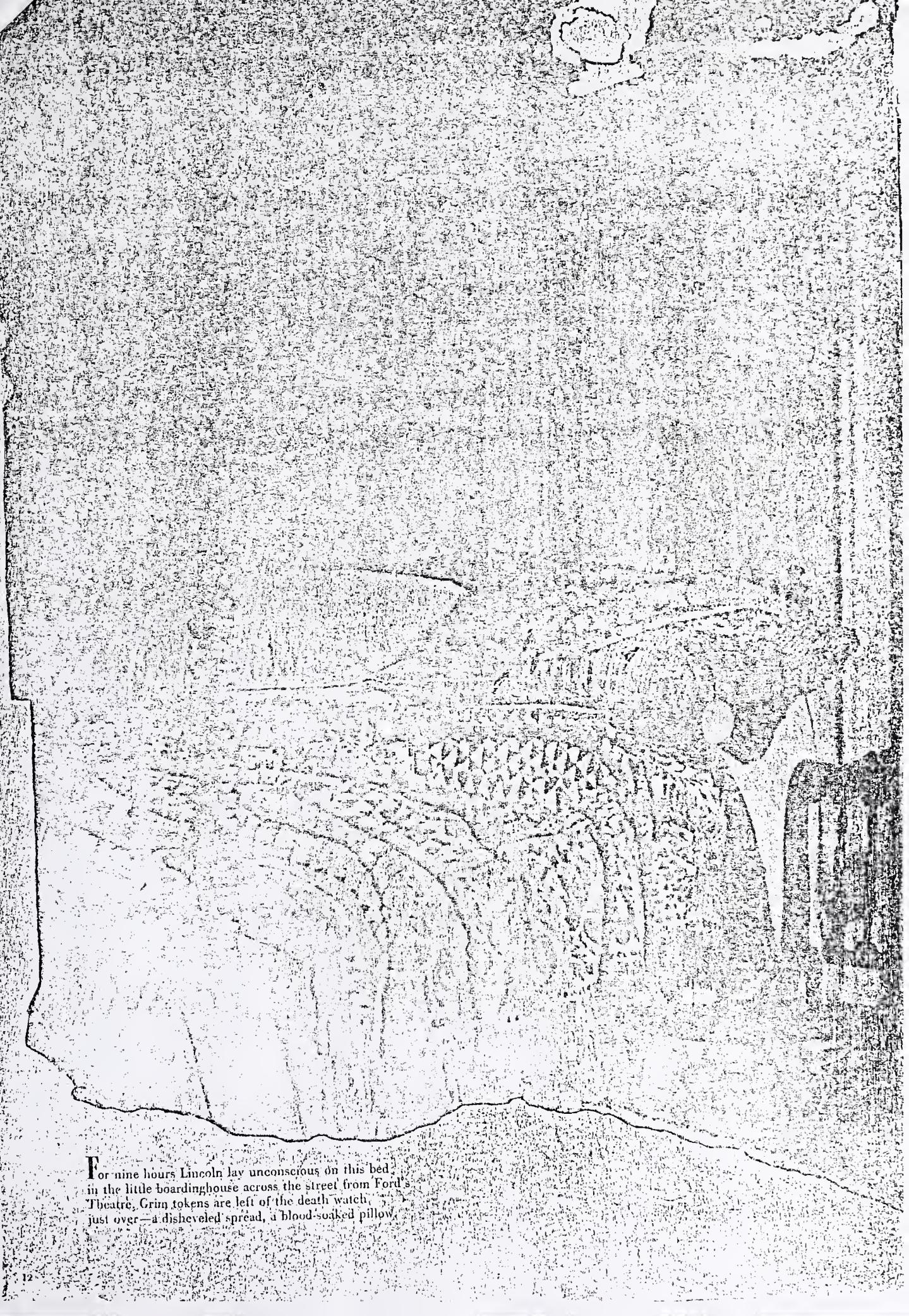
More than 60 people had moved in and out of the death room during the night, weeping and helpless. The first few came carrying the limp President in their arms, and because of his great length they laid him diagonally on the bed. His head was on the pillow next to the door and his six 12 feet stuck out past the short coverlet toward the wall.

The scent of lilacs

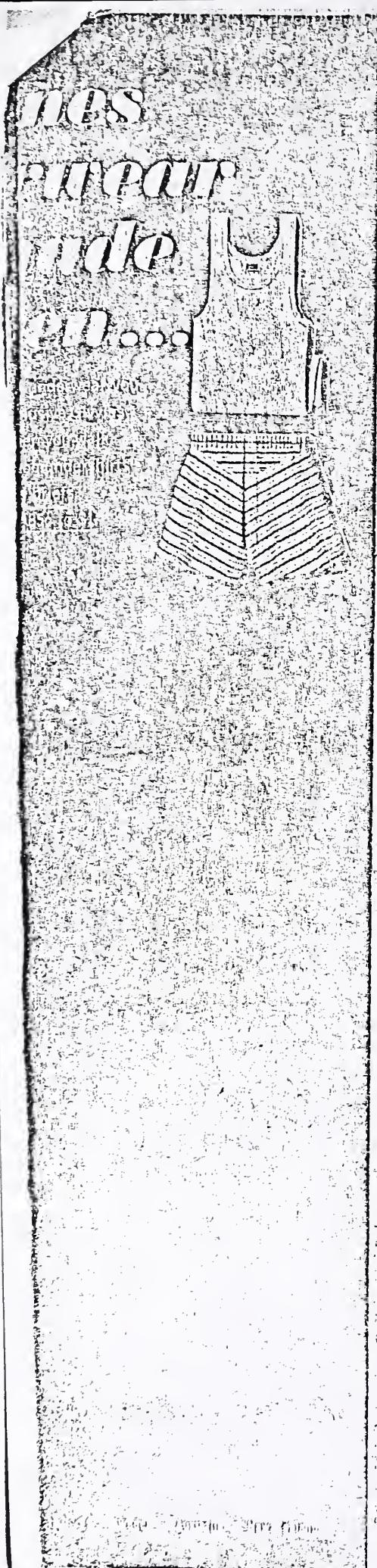
Then the bed was pulled into the center of the room so that Dr. Taft could stand behind, holding Mr. Lincoln's head to prevent it from rolling over. Dr. Leale, who had been the first to enter the presidential box at Ford's Theatre, had explored the bullet wound with his little finger, which just fitted, and he remembered it was a smooth feeling. Dr. Taft kept the blood flowing with a silver probe, kept it oozing, oozing, brain and blood together, for whenever a clot formed life seemed almost to slip away. Through the open door and windows of this back room flowed the heavy sweet smell of lilacs blooming close outside in the yard. All through the rest of his life, with each new spring, a whiff of lilac would turn Dr. Taft sick with remembrance.

Thirteen doctors in all bent over the unconscious man and tried to save him. They stripped him of all clothing for everyone knew Booth had a dagger as well as a pistol. But there was nothing except for where Booth's huge bullet had torn through his skull. By rights he ought to die within two hours but, seeing him, the doctors were not so sure. They put hot water bottles beside his chilling legs and drew up the covers. For a spare man the President's arms were enormous. They were a wood-chopper's arms, hidden these years in Washington under the long black sleeves of his suit.

The night crept on. The face of "the great sufferer," as Secretary Welles called him, was green-white under the fluttering gas light. Whenever Mrs. Lincoln came in from the front parlor, clean napkins were spread over the drenched red of the pillows. She did not seem to see the sticky pools on the carpet. Wildly she flung herself on her husband. "Love, live but for one moment to speak to me once—speak to a



For nine hours Lincoln lay unconscious on this bed, in the little boardinghouse across the street from Ford's Theatre. Grim tokens are left of the death watch just over—a disheveled spread, a blood-soaked pillow.



our children!" she would cry, and then, frightened by his guttural, snorke-like breaths, she would utter piercing shrieks. So prolonged and unearthly were they that Secretary of War Edwin Stanton gave the order, "Take that woman out and do not let her in again."

Dr. Leale quietly took her place at the bedside, holding Mr. Lincoln's hand in his. If the President should regain the power of thought, he wanted him to know that he had a friend.

In spite of the soldiers at the front door it was not hard to squeeze through the crowd in the street and slip through the basement entrance and up the back stairs to the death chamber. One who did was W. J. Ferguson, the youthful call boy from the cast of *Our American Cousin*, the play Lincoln had been watching. Young Ferguson recalled that this room was recently lived in by the actor John Matthews, also of *Our American Cousin*. Ferguson had often come here to deliver parts to be memorized, and the last time he had entered this room there was another actor lying on the very bed where the President now lay, visiting with Matthews and smoking a pipe. It was John Wilkes Booth.

Morning came, and with it death. There were about 30 people around the bed when Lincoln died. The struggling breaths came every half minute, then there was a whole minute. One more drawing in the last. All present knelt, and Stanton threw himself on the bed and buried his head in the bedclothes, sobbing uncontrollably. The young stenographer Tanner, who had been taking down telegrams and testimony of witnesses in the next room, thought he made out the words, "Now he belongs to the angels." This was later altered by common agreement to the grander sentiment, "Now he belongs to the ages."

It was 22 minutes past 7. "I will speak to God," said the President's pastor, Dr. Gurley, and he began, "Thy will be done." The room was cleared and the shades drawn. Stanton held a Cabinet meeting and the swearing in of Vice President Johnson was discussed. By 8 o'clock almost everyone was gone. Mrs. Lincoln paused before getting into her carriage to look across at the theater and say, "That dreadful house! That dreadful house!"

Julius Ulke readied his camera and got out his trays and bottles. A temporary coffin arrived and a flag to cover it and six soldiers as escort. At 9 o'clock the bed was empty. Ulke and Clark pushed it back against the wall, and the long exposure of a collodion-coated glass negative was made and, as it had to be, immediately developed. Bookshelves are groaning with descriptions of the last hours of our 16th President. But somehow Julius Ulke's portrait of a room has for the first time made that terrible night heartbreakingly real.

On Sunday, April 16, Clark and Ulke spent the day helping Albert Berghaus, the artist, who was to make a drawing of the death scene for Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*. Clark undertook to locate the positions of those present around the bed. When the conception was published, it was a cozy little affair, omitting most of the Cabinet officers, military men, physicians, political associates and old friends who were present. It featured prominently Mr. Petersen, the boarding-house owner, and his young son as well as someone who never made

Death scene drawing was made by Albert Berghaus who used Ulke's photograph in order to reconstruct the details of the scene: spool bed, striped wallpaper, the elaborately designed coverlet, blood-soaked pillow. In appreciation of Ulke's assistance, Berghaus portrayed Julius Ulke and his brother Henry, who was a famous portrait painter in Washington. They are shown at far left. Deathbed is now at Chicago Historical Society. The only true relic remaining in the Washington room is one of the blood-spattered pillows.

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never could forgive Lincoln for being President instead of himself, decided he could be of no help and did not get up. In his drawing Bergthaus made grateful use of Ulke's photograph, copying from it the details of the walls of the room, the chair and the bed. Where other artists showed Lincoln reposing on billows of snowy linen, only Bergthaus drew the lousied head against dark stains.

After Ulke's picture was taken, William Clark cleaned up his room and went right on sleeping in his bed, even using the same coverlet. Almost immediately he was bothered by hundreds of visitors, most of whom were anxious to take away a memento. He had to hide Mr. Lincoln's clothes as well as the bloodstained pillow. Already there had been a great dividing of trophies. Thirteen-year-old Pauline Petersen, just after the Ulke picture was taken, came down the very stairs of the picture and asked what she could have. She was given one of the pillows, not a spectacular one, but it did have a tiny red spot on one end of its ticking.

The picture is censored

Any plans that Ulke had for making reproductions of his photograph were quickly crushed. It would have to remain a family secret, for notices began appearing in the papers of the photograph that had been taken of the President in his coffin at City Hall, New York. Though the exposure was made from an upper balcony at a distance and though Gurney and Son, the photographers, explained that the representation would be of the whole scene, not giving any features of the corpse, Stanton raged. He said angrily that all photographs were expressly forbidden by Mrs. Lincoln and that the plates must be seized and smashed. Prominent people joined the photographers' plea. It was only what thousands had already been allowed to see and what many more thousands were longing to see. But Stanton's wrath became explosive and the plates met their doom. Fortunately for the nation one City Hall print survives today, recently turned up under ironic circumstances. It had been preserved by the terrible-tempered Edwin Stanton himself.

The Secretary of War's behavior could have had only one effect on a man who had made a similar photograph. Julius Ulke kept very still, for his picture was more intimate, more poignant than the confiscated scene. He directed that it be cherished and handed down through his family—and so it was. For the past generation it has been cared for by a 93-year-old Ulke descendant who lives in England and who this year parted with her precious inheritance in order to raise money for her church.

It is America's inheritance now, seen publicly for the first time on the anniversary of Lincoln's death. Studying the little room as it looked that dark morning, we can almost hear the slow hoarse breathing on the piteous bed and can almost smell the lilac-scented air.

STUDY
WORLD
buy it
FOR THEM

Lincoln's world is made for us
and it is for us to make it ours
—the world of freedom, of justice,
of equality, of brotherhood, of
kindness, of the best of all
the highest ideals.

—Theodore Roosevelt

—William Howard Taft

—Woodrow Wilson

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

—Harry S. Truman

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

—Lyndon B. Johnson

—Richard M. Nixon

—Gerald R. Ford

—Ronald Reagan

—George H. W. Bush

—George W. Bush

—Bill Clinton

—George W. Bush

—Barack Obama

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cc: M. Neely
 L. Davis
 file

Photo shows Lincoln's death bed

by DELL FORD
 Staff Writer

Americans have been anxious about Abraham Lincoln's death since the day he died, Mark Neely Jr. said, glancing at the tinted photograph on his desk.

"And," he added, "they still are." Neely, director of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum, 1300 S. Clinton St., said he gets as many questions about Lincoln's death as about his life.

For that reason, the photograph of his desk should be of more than usual interest to museum visitors. Acquired from a private collector December, the photo is of the room where Lincoln died. It has

New exhibit

WHERE: Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln National Life Insurance Co., 1300 S. Clinton St.

HOURS: 5 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday
 and 5:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday

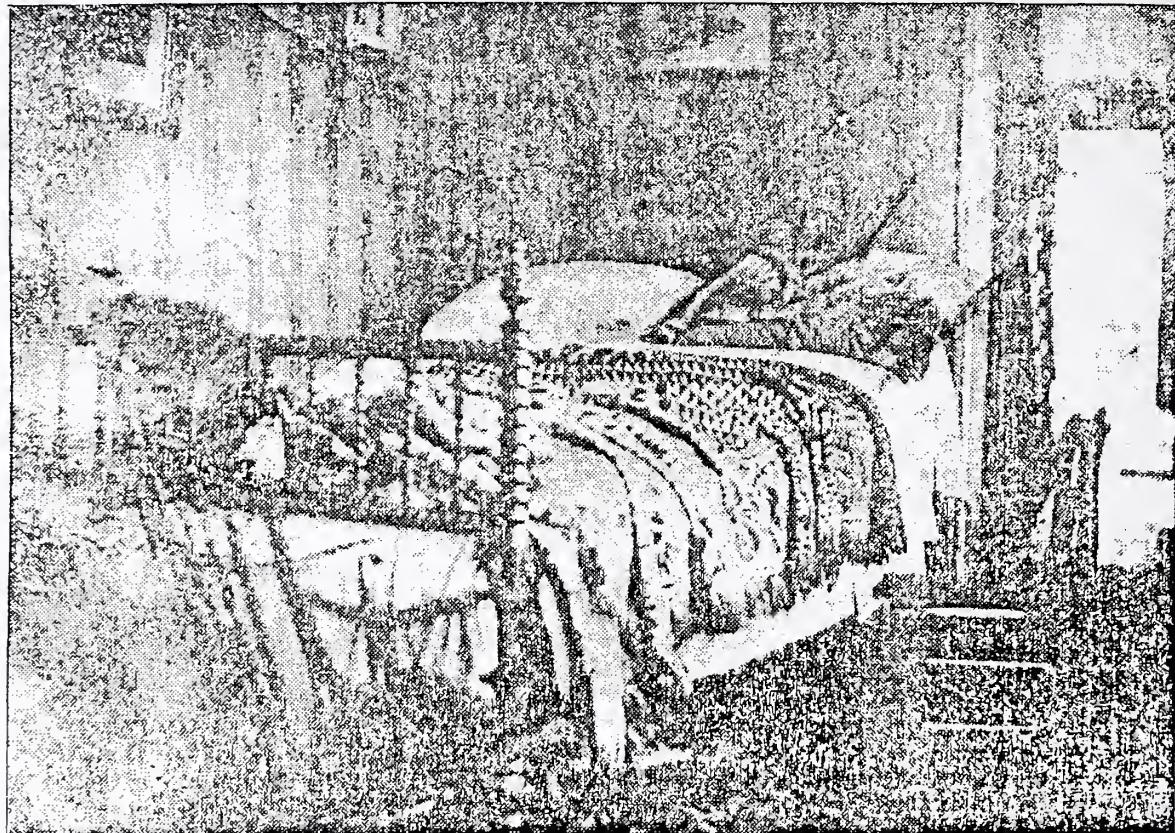
ADMISSION: Free
 TELEPHONE: 427-3864

come a part of one of the museum's collection of memorabilia, sure to be of interest to those who wish to take note of Lincoln's Feb. 12 birthday.

The sepia-toned, 8-by-6 1/4 inch photo is captioned: "View of the room in which President Lincoln died Saturday morning April 15, 1865, at the residence of William Petersen, No. 453 10th Street, Washington D. C., opposite Ford's theatre. The room was occupied by William T. Clark of Massachusetts."

The sole existing print (as far as Neely knows), the photograph was recorded by Julius Ulke, a painter at the Petersen House across the street from Ford's theatre where Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth.

"He had the presence of mind,"
 See LINCOLN, Page 9D.



The room after Lincoln's death is captured in this photograph



Popular prints gave Lincoln's last moments a larger locale

Lincoln

From Page 1D.

Neely said, "to go into the room after Lincoln's body was removed and set up his apparatus. Lincoln died at 7:22 a.m. You can see the morning light coming through the open door (of the room), so the photograph probably was taken about 9 or 9:30."

Ulke, Neely said, took at least two photographs. "We know of two. He no doubt was going to try and sell them. That's what he had in mind, I'm sure. But he never did it."

Offering one possible explanation for Ulke's failure to sell the photographs, Neely said photos were taken of Lincoln lying in state in New York City.

"But the War Department ordered those photos be destroyed because Mrs. Lincoln didn't want any photographs. It's sheer speculation, but Ulke probably figured from this he couldn't sell his photographs."

What adds interest to Ulke's death room scene is it's stark contrast to the lithographs which were artists' imaginative renderings of the deathbed scene.

One such rendering, Neely said, shows about a dozen people gathered about the bed where Lincoln had been placed. Another depicts 46 mourners.

"The room was very small," Neely said, pointing to the Ulke photo. "It couldn't have accommodated that many people. But at the time, this was the way a great man was supposed to die. Like a medieval knight, with his family, servants, retainers. In Lincoln's case, prominent politicians, cabinet members, members of his family."

While it may seem "really grim to us today — not very appetizing and generally distasteful, mourning practices were different then. It was common practice, for instance, to wear a locket with a lock of hair of a deceased loved one.

"In the 19th century," Neely said,

"death was great and sex was bad. In the 20th century, sex is great and we don't talk about death. Today, people die in hospitals behind a screen with no one present except perhaps a nurse and one or two family members. Death is a private, forbidden subject — taboo. No one wants to talk about it."

The Ulke photograph, the director said, will be placed in the Lincoln's death exhibit which includes a reward poster for the assassins and two popular prints of Lincoln's deathbed scene.

Calling the Ulke photo a good acquisition, Neely said, "Any time you get a unique item in the Lincoln field, it's a good acquisition. Any time you can buy something that's the first, the last, the best or the only, it's a good acquisition."

